

## State Commission

The Governor's Office of Volunteerism in the New Jersey Department of State provided critical leadership in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. The Office of Volunteerism staff worked with the New Jersey VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) and County Long-Term Recovery Groups and responded to requests for assistance, donations, and volunteers. To date, more than 250,000 volunteers have served in the Sandy recovery. The Office of Volunteerism worked with volunteer and faith-based groups from New Jersey and across the nation. They also worked to bring AmeriCorps members from across the country to assist in communities of high need. A total of 378 AmeriCorps members and national service staff were deployed to New Jersey. They established Volunteer Recovery Centers which enrolled more than 8,000 volunteers and completed more than 1,300 mucking and gutting work orders in the early months for homes most affected by flooding and mold. The Commission established a volunteer hotline number and a new volunteer online portal where volunteers can register to help in various service areas, as well as during disasters. Those who register to volunteer receive a thank you email from the Lt. Governor and their registration is forwarded to one of 24 partner volunteer centers and nonprofits that are seeking volunteer assistance.

## AmeriCorps State

The Camden PowerCorps deploys 60 AmeriCorps members to meet the needs of the City of Camden including maintaining parks, storm water inlets, and other green infrastructure projects. Members of this AmeriCorps program are primarily opportunity youth who are aging out of the child welfare or foster care systems, reentering from the juvenile justice system, have not completed their high school education, or face other challenges. Over the three-year program period, AmeriCorps members will maintain more than 53 green infrastructure installations including 20 rain gardens, 10 city and county parks, 400 vacant lots, and 5,500 storm water inlets. They will also recruit an additional 400 volunteers to clean waterways, plant trees and help to maintain and beautify Camden.

## AmeriCorps National

Citizen Schools is a nonprofit organization that partners with middle schools to expand the learning day for children in low-income communities. Its AmeriCorps members serve in public schools in Newark, leading real-world learning projects, providing academic support, and helping all students discover and achieve their dreams. In their two years of service, AmeriCorps members serve as Teaching Fellows, providing students with months of extra learning through academic mentoring and skill-building apprenticeships that translates into college readiness and career opportunities. Citizen Schools has been recognized as a leader in engaging volunteers, generating student impact, and balancing direct service with systemic change efforts. Students who are supported by Citizen Schools graduated from high school within four years at a rate of 71 percent, compared to 59 percent among matched peers, and 61 percent of Citizen Schools' alumni enroll in college.

FoodCorps has 10 AmeriCorps members serving in Atlantic City, Camden, Clayton, Long Beach, Morristown, Newark, New Brunswick, Paterson, Salem, and Trenton. FoodCorps is a nationwide team of AmeriCorps leaders who work under the direction of local partner organizations to connect children to real food and help them grow up healthy. They teach children hands-on lessons about food and nutrition build and tend school gardens, teach cooking lessons, and help change what's on lunch trays so that children can eat healthy food from local farms. In the past year, the FoodCorps members in New Jersey served 8,007 children, built or brought back into use 48 school and community gardens, harvested 943 pounds of produce, and recruited 517 community volunteers.

Relay Graduate School has 22 full-time AmeriCorps Professional Corps members serving in Newark as part of the Relay Newark Teaching Residency. The Residency addresses the need for better and more diverse teachers in low-income communities in Newark by recruiting college graduates from the local community and training them over two years to serve as full-time teachers through a comprehensive residency program. In their first year, AmeriCorps members serve as teachers-in-training in one of Relay's high-needs partner public schools. Each AmeriCorps member is paired with a Resident Advisor and spends five days a week in the Advisor's classroom, learning to use high-impact teaching strategies as they teach English or math. At the end of their first year, the AmeriCorps members are prepared and certified to serve as full-time teachers of record, poised for a career improving educational and life outcomes for students in low-income communities. Relay's members have reached 1,257 students, and 886 of these students saw gains in either math or English knowledge.

## AmeriCorps VISTA

New Jersey VOAD (Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster) and NJ211 have partnered to sponsor the First Call for Help AmeriCorps VISTA project. A project that began in support of Hurricane Sandy recovery has evolved to strategically developing New Jersey's resiliency by strengthening local capacity to prepare and respond to future disasters. AmeriCorps VISTA members focus on statewide initiatives as well as intensive collaboration with local partners. As a direct result of these efforts, more than ten local VOADs and COADs (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) have been formed, reconvened, or received capacity-building support. Members conduct membership outreach and have trained the VOADs and COADs to better communicate before, during, and after disaster. In 2015, one VISTA member partnered with the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management and the New Jersey Governor's Office of Volunteerism to develop HelpNJnow.org, a website designed to provide public information on disaster preparedness and guidance on how to help New Jersey communities recovering from a disaster.

The Center for Family Services (CFS) mobilized 20 AmeriCorps VISTA members in 2015 to enhance and expand a variety of programming designed to support families and fight poverty in Camden County. AmeriCorps VISTA members created systems to make operations more efficient and effective, conducted outreach, and raised funds on behalf of the families served by CFS. For example, the member that served at the Promise Neighborhood Family Success Center helped establish a partnership with a regional grocery store to bring groceries into communities with limited access to fresh and affordable food. She conducted outreach to senior housing facilities in the city and signed senior residents up for free grocery delivery, providing seniors access to healthy, affordable food right at their door step. Another member supported the Born to Read initiative which aims to ensure kindergarten readiness and increase exposure to books for Camden children. She obtained enough book donations to place new books in every Head Start classroom in Camden, providing diversified reading material for all children participating in the program.

## AmeriCorps NCCC

HomeFront's mission is to end homelessness in Central New Jersey by harnessing the caring resources and expertise of its communities. An AmeriCorps NCCC team helped with the preparation and relocation of the Family Preservation Center (FPC) from its previous location to a new campus. In addition, AmeriCorps NCCC members provided support to the HomeFront's summer youth program and restored a warehouse and food distribution center. Members produced nearly \$10,000 in cost savings and painted rooms on the shelter's top floor, which houses families with female heads-of-household. The team even went beyond their initial call and gathered a "wish list" of projects for HomeFront which included painting affordable housing owned by HomeFront; helping sort, file, and archive documents; picking up and delivering donated furniture and materials; working at the HomeFront community center summer camp, and moving furniture into a nearly-completed center.

St. Bernard Project is a New Orleans-based nonprofit that exists to ensure disaster-impacted communities have a prompt, efficient and predictable path to recovery. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, the St. Bernard Project has worked closely with stakeholders in New York and New Jersey to help rebuild communities that are still reeling from the storm. In the summer and fall of 2015, an AmeriCorps NCCC team served with SBP in Sea Bright, leading volunteers in demolition, mold remediation, and ultimately restoration of storm-damaged homes. Members worked as logistics coordinators to ensure supplies were delivered to each site for rebuilding, and gained skills in volunteer coordination, construction, disaster recovery, and logistics management. This team provided two families with direct support in getting back into their homes and completed a large amount of the rebuilding process. The team also spent eight hours every Sunday walking around town, going door to door, finding other families that would benefit from St. Bernard Project's services.

## Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

Each year, more than 545 of New Jersey's seniors volunteer as Foster Grandparents to work one on one with kids to help build their academic and social skills. Foster Grandparents are role models, academic coaches, mentors, and friends to children with exceptional needs. The New Jersey Governor's Office of Volunteerism sponsors one of four of New Jersey's Foster Grandparent Programs and mobilizes more than 175 volunteers 55 and older to serve in 45 sites across ten counties. Collectively, they have served more than 176,500 hours in 2015. These dedicated Foster Grandparents engaged 340 preschoolers one-on-one to develop important skills in language, pre-reading, letter and number identification, and following directions as well as encourage the children to develop social and age appropriate interactions with peers. This development is critical to helping ensure a strong start in kindergarten. Other Foster Grandparents in the program worked with 30 K-12 students with exceptional needs to support their academic success.

## Senior Corps RSVP

Each year, thousands of volunteers age 55 and older join RSVP to strengthen New Jersey's communities. The Ocean County Board of Social Services has managed the RSVP program for more than 33 years. In Ocean County, where more than one-third of the population is 55 and older, many RSVP volunteers focus on helping other seniors remain independent and engaged in their community. More than 3,000 seniors living in Ocean County report that they have no family nearby to provide care and assistance. Therefore, more than half of the program's 225 RSVP volunteers provide services that help older adults live independently. RSVP volunteers provided regular transportation services to nearly 1,000 older adults in 2015; taking them to do shopping, banking, and to doctor's appointments. This critical service allows people to continue to live independently even when they are not able to drive or manage public transportation. In addition, RSVP volunteers provided nearly 900 meals to homebound older adults, 30 percent of whom report living alone.

## Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

Our Lady of Lourdes Health Foundation sponsors the Senior Companion Program serving Camden, Gloucester, and Burlington counties. In 2015, they mobilized 64 Senior Companion volunteers to provide companionship for more than 300 homebound and older adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks such as shopping or paying bills. Collectively, the Senior Companions have provided more than 80,000 hours of service to help these adults remain independent in their homes. The companionship and social intervention the volunteers provide plays an important role in both improving the quality of life of the clients as well as prolonging their independence and forestalling premature and expensive long-term care.

## Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) transforms lives by using evidence to find what works and make it work for more people. The SIF Classic and SIF Pay for Success programs harness the expertise of grantmaking intermediaries to identify, evaluate and expand effective nonprofits serving low-income communities across America. The SIF programs working throughout the state are working to address issues such as supportive housing, workforce sustainability and youth health. The Social Innovation Fund is investing \$169,100 in expanding the impact of five nonprofits in New Jersey.